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The Wife and Foolish Virgins described.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

TWO SERMONS

DELIVERED AT

KWELL-STREET MEETING, ON FEBRUARY

14 and 28, 1797.

BY WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S. S.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET, AND MONKWELL-STREET MEETING.

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THE LIGHT OF THE RIGHTEOUS REJOICETH, WHEN THE LAMP OF THE WICKED SHALL BE PUT OUT. PROV. xiii. 9.

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THE WISE VIRGINS DESCRIBED.

SERMON I.

MATTHEW XXV, 4.

BUT THE WISE TOOK OIL IN THEIR VESSELS WITH THEIR LAMPS.

THE intention of this parable is, to ſhew to the ſaints the caſe and ſtate of the church of God towards the cloſe of time, when the Judge will be ſtanding before the door; when the ſun of righteouſneſs will be going down over a ſinful world; when the ſhadows of the evening, of the goſpel diſpenſation, will be ſtretched out, and the midnight cry juſt ready to be uſhered in.

Then, *then ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* By the kingdom of heaven here is not meant ultimate glory, nor the goſpel; though both theſe are called the kingdom: nor is the empire of grace in the heart intended; but the viſible crowd of profeſſors, whether real or nominal. The ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom are what is here meant, conſiſting of two ſorts: ſome real ſubjects, internally ſo by grace; and others only externally ſo in appearance and by profeſſion. The number *ten* ſhews the ſmall quantity of profeſſors that will be found in the world at that time; for it will be as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. When the Son of man cometh the world will be very buſy,

profeſſor

profeſſors very few, and vital godlineſs at a very low ebb.

The title given them is that of *virgins*, becauſe of their outward and apparent adherence to Chriſt, his truth and worſhip, and to an open profeſſion of his name.

Their *going forth* intends their turning their back upon the world, and joining themſelves to, and aſſociating with the children of God.

What they had in view at their ſetting out was, *to meet the bridegroom*. This is what they all aimed at. They expected that he would appear as their lover, not as an angry judge, and to be embraced by him, and received into his preſence. This was their hope and expectation, as appears by the confuſion they were in when ſhut out, and by their earneſt entreaties to be admitted. But they were diſappointed of their hopes, and their expectations were cut off; and no wonder, for one half of this company was wrong at their firſt ſetting out, and ſo they were at their journey's end. For *five* of them were *fooliſh*. Theſe took not their veſſels, nor had they any oil with them; and therefore their lamps went out when they had the greateſt need of them, namely, at *midnight*. Nor did the ſpiritual Aaron, our great high-prieſt, either trim their lamps, or feed them; and therefore they of courſe went out; and, when out, they were left in the dark, which to them is an earneſt and a prelude to everlaſting darkneſs.

My deſign is to handle theſe two ſorts of virgins ſeparately, that you may ſee the one from the other. I intend to diſcourſe on the *wiſe* virgins at this time, and at ſome future period I will treat of the *fooliſh*. Now for the words of my text.

But the wiſe took oil in their veſſels with their lamps. In handling this ſubject I will endeavour to deſcribe,

I. The

I. The virgins.
II. Their wisdom.
III. Their lamps.
IV. Their vessels.
V. Their oil. And,
Lastly, How they fared at their journey's end.

First, I am to treat of these *virgins*.

The term virgin is given to a young unmarried woman, who has kept herself chaste and undefiled. Hence we read of virgins whom no man hath known.

Sometimes it signifies a young woman newly married, and who hath lost her husband by death: *Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.* Joel i. 18.

This name is often given to a city which hath not been forced by a siege, nor taken, conquered, sacked or rifled. Hence we read, *Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.* Isaiah xlvii. 1. So we read of the virgin the daughter of Zion, and of the virgin of Israel; and indeed, *there are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; but my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, and the choice one of her that bare her.* But the virgins in my text are so called on a religious account, because of their faithful and close attachment to the Son of God, and on account of the purity of their consciences, their lives, doctrines, and worship: they had not suffered themselves to be seduced, defiled, and corrupted, from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The virgins here mentioned, which are called wise virgins, are heavenly and spiritual virgins, as the bridegroom they go forth to meet is the heavenly spiritual bridegroom. They are elected or chosen persons;

perſons ; choſen in Chriſt, and given to him before ever the world was made, and were ſecretly eſpouſed to him from all eternity in God the Father's purpoſe, and in the cordial acceptance of them by Chriſt himſelf; on which account he calls himſelf their husband before they are openly eſpouſed to him. *Fear not, for thy Maker is thy huſband, the Lord of Hoſts is his name*, &c.

But there is an open eſpouſal of them in time, by the power and preſence of Chriſt attending the goſpel preached, as ſaith the apoſtle ; *I have eſpouſed you to a good huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.* Indeed, before Chriſt is known we are wedded to the law of works, until we find that the law worketh wrath in us, and miniſters death to us ; that is weak through the fleſh, and therefore can give us no help ; a killing letter, and can give us no life. This makes us die to all hope in it, and it appears a dead letter to us ; then, when faith comes, we get from under it, and are no more bound to its rigorous exactions, being redeemed from it by the crucifixion of Chriſt, and delivered from it by the grace of Chriſt. *Wherefore my brethren, ye alſo are become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.* Rom. vii. 4. Hence it is that a poor ſoul, mourning under his ſins, and condemned by the law, is compared to a deſolate widow, until Chriſt betroths the ſoul to himſelf: *Fear not, for thou ſhalt not be aſhamed ; neither be thou confounded, for thou ſhalt not be put to ſhame ; for thou ſhalt forget the ſhame of thy youth, and ſhalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more ; for thy Maker is thine huſband, the Lord of Hoſts is his name.* Iſaiah liv. 4. Here we forgot the ſhame of our youth, guilt being purged away ; and, as for Satan, law, and conſcience, they can no longer reproach us with being without

Chriſt

Chriſt and having no hope in the world, for we are to remember the reproach of our widowhood no more; old things are paſſed away, and all things are become new. The name of *widow* is rubbed off, and the name of *virgin* is given. And, when this reproach and ſhame are purged away, and all our reproachers are ſilenced, then it is that the union takes place between the heavenly bridegroom and the poor diſtreſſed ſoul; love is ſhed abroad in the heart, and nothing but love is diſcovered in the altogether lovely Jeſus. This love knits the marriage-knot, cures all our love ſickneſſes, and its cruel attendant raging jealouſy. Love caſts out fear and torment, joins the ſoul to Chriſt, and it is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God. Such, ſaith Paul, are *preſented as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.*

This myſtical marriage was pointed out under the former diſpenſation. The high-prieſt, who was a type of Chriſt in his prieſtly office, was ſtrictly forbidden to take any perſon to wife but a virgin: *And he ſhall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, theſe ſhall he not take; but he ſhall take a virgin of his own people to wife.* Levit. xxi. 13, 14. In alluſion to this, all the followers of the High Prieſt of our profeſſion are called *virgins.*

But again. This virgin is one who ſtrictly adheres to her marriage covenant, by which *ſhe is betrothed to the Lord for ever, even betrothed to him in righteouſneſs, in judgement, in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies: yea, I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the Lord.* Hoſea ii. 19, 20. The covenant of grace, in which ſhe was given to Chriſt, and in which Chriſt was given to her, is highly eſteemed by her: ſhe knows that, in the ancient ſettlements, in the divine counſels of old, *a certain man made a marriage for his ſon*; and, in

in the day of her eſpouſals, ſhe ſets her ſeal to the truth of this: *it is the whore that forſaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God, whoſe ways take hold on hell, going down to the chambers of death*; but this virgin abides by the doctrines of Chriſt, and hath both the Father and the Son: ſhe hath God to her father, and Chriſt to her huſband.

Moreover, this virgin is embraced, in all her bridal attire, as a bride prepared for her husband. God imputes the wedding garment of his dear Son to her; her faith apprehends it, and puts it on; God the Father draws her to her beloved, and he receives her as the Father's gift, ſaying, This is now bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh; ſhe ſhall be called *Evah*, the mother of all living ſaints, and *Hephzibah*, for my delight is in her. *This is a great myſtery; but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church.* Loving-kindneſs crowns her head, imputed righteouſneſs enrobes her perſon, meekneſs and quietude adorn her ſoul, modeſty and baſhfulneſs appear in her countenance; and ſhe often bluſhes at a ſight and ſenſe of her own unworthineſs. An illuminated underſtanding and faith are her eyes; the bond of the covenant and its promiſes the chain of her neck; her ſhoes are *peace*, and *truth* her girdle: and ſo ſure as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with his ornaments, ſo ſure is this bride thus adorned with her jewels.

Furthermore, her faith and affection to her royal conſort are ſorely tried. Many of Satan's procurers try hard to degrade and debaſe her ſpouſe, in order to leſſen him in her eſteem, and to rival him in her effections; many old pimps ſit at the ſeats of their doors, and lie in wait at every corner, in order to enſnare and beguile her, ſaying, *Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But theſe know not the thoughts of the Lord.* Micah iv. 11. Neither Satan, the

the arch seducer, nor any of his forestallers; neither Jezebel the witch, nor Babylon the whore; could ever finally alienate her affections from her covenant Head, or so damp her love as to get her to relinquish her hold of him, to embrace the bosom of a stranger, to follow other lovers, to admire their bed when she saw it, or to discover herself to another, so as to expose herself to be judged, as a woman that breaketh wedlock is judged; nay, so far from it, that she will not suffer lawful love to the creature to grow into inordinate affection without checking it, disapproving and disallowing of it, so as even to cry to her husband about it: *Draw me, and we will run after thee.* If thou dost not draw me, I shall be drawn away from thee. She is not like that easy, quiet whore in the city, who was to be stoned to death for her sinful compliance, and for not crying out. *Deut.* xxii. 24. In short, at the worst of times this virgin can say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* And, if misled and detained a captive, yet, as soon as she gets loose, she will say, *I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.* I come next to treat of

II. The *wisdom* of these virgins. The other virgins are called *fools*; but these are said to be *wise*. The first appearance of their wisdom is in learning to bring distant things near. They dare not cause the seat of violence to approach while they put far away the evil day. The day of judgment and they are daily conversing together, however terrible the meditation, or shocking the appearance. This is one part of the wisdom that God calls for: *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would but consider their latter end. The wise man foresees the evil, and hideth himself; but the wicked pass on, and are punished.* To foresee the evil day is to bring it near, to cite ourselves at the bar both of God's law and our own conscience, in order to judge ourselves, that

we may not be judged, and that we may accept the punishment of our iniquity, and not be condemned with the world; and to search and see which way a poor sinner may fly from the wrath to come; and, when Christ, *the hiding-place from the storm*, is discovered, to betake ourselves, with all our grievances and troubles, and with all our confessions and petitions, to him, in order to embrace him as the only refuge that God hath set before us: and when faith gives us access to love of his heart, we are hid; and under his shadow we shall dwell in safety till every calamity be overpast. That which prompts us to this is the alarm of God in our conscience, which awakens a whole army of terrors and fears about us; and this *fear is the beginning of wisdom*, and operates upon us as it did upon Noah when God apprised him of the future deluge: *He was moved with fear, and prepared the ark.* We are moved with the same fear, and betake ourselves to Jesus, for fear of being drowned in destruction and perdition.

This wisdom farther discovers itself by making the heart honest and humble, to tremble at, and to come to, the light of divine revelation. The heart that is endowed with this wisdom, and implanted with this fear, moves in concert with the lively oracles of God. If God threatens, the sinner trembles; if God forbids, he tries to forbear; if he contends, he stands mute; if he smites him, he falls under it; if he pleads against him, his unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God; if he says, Come, let us reason together, he keeps his distance; if he sets his sins in order before him, he knows they are not all there; if he fills him with wrath and rebuke, he expects worse; if he writes bitter things against him, he aggravates every circumstance in the hand writing; if he is inclined to be propitious, he refuses to be comforted; if mercy melts him, he coyly refuses it; and, if God appears pacified toward him, he

he abhors himself in his own sight for his iniquity. Not so the fool: he hates the light; Prophesy smooth things, prophesy deceits, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us, saith he; heal our wounds slightly; cry peace, peace. *These have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is there in them?* Jer. viii. 9.

Their highest wisdom consists in this, they know their Saviour, and their interest in him; they know whom they hath believed, and that their faith in him hath purified their heart; the blood of sprinkling speaks in them, and the Spirit bears witness to their sonship; and this is *to be made wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ.*

Such a soul knows that there is no other way into the holy of holies, but that which Christ hath consecrated through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and, as he received him, so he endeavours to walk in him; and every thing that has a tendency to stagger, stumble, or impede him in his way; to fetter him, clog him, damp his zeal, or check his diligence; he endeavours to avoid. *The fool believeth every word, but the wise man looks well to his way.*

If any thing stumbles his judgment, he prays for instruction; if he cannot make straight paths for his feet, he waits for God's counsel; if the standard be lifted up, he mends his pace; if his heart be enlarged, he runs; if the sun shines, he lays by every weight, and the sin that so easily besets him, the worst of which is unbelief. *The wisdom of the wise is to understand his way.*

Such a soul knows that God's way is not his way; that it is not obvious to the light of nature; that, unless God shines upon it, it cannot be discerned, although so many eminent men have been employed in casting it up: hence he tries it by the word, seeks direction of the best guides, feels for God's arm, leans on his beloved, and observes the dictates of the

the Holy Spirit! and, when he has the approbation of Christ and conscience, *wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: and this way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*

The wisdom of this poor soul lies in his knowing what is acceptable to God. Without forgiveness of sin he knows there can be no admission to heaven; for *the unclean shall not enter there*; *without holiness* (by the Spirit) *no man shall see the Lord*; without an imputed righteousness no acceptance; *the unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom*; and without truth in the heart all religion is vain; for truth must be settled in heaven; but he cannot come there *who loveth and maketh a lie.* These things he seeks, after these he follows, and these best gifts he covets, as things that accompany salvation; and all these things he has in Christ, and he enjoys them by virtue of union with him: *And this is the wise man, who builds his house, digs deep, and founds it upon a rock; that, when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, it stands fast, being founded upon a rock.*

Once more: The wise man knows the connexion that Christ sustains, and in what covenant relation he stands to him; that he is made of God unto him wisdom as well as righteousness; and to know him and the power of his resurrection is the quintessence of all wisdom; and all wisdom short of this he deems folly. *If any man will be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise*; for all human wisdom is foolishness with God, as it is said, *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, vain in their imagination, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Which leads me,

III. To describe their *lamps.* This parable seems to have an allusion to a Jewish wedding, which came on after the espousals. The night being arrived for the

the young couple to come together, the bridegroom and his friends set off with their lights, from his father's house, to meet the bride; at which time she and her female attendants set off from her father's house to meet him, in order to be conducted to the house which he had provided for her. And so it is here. Christ leaves heaven, his father's house, and comes with all the saints and angels attending him; when the bride, and her companions, shall be brought to him, *with joy and rejoicing shall they be brought, and shall enter into the king's palace*; namely, the new earth first, *wherein dwelleth righteousness*, and shall spend a thousand years with him; at which time he shall present her to himself a glorious church, *having neither spot nor wrinkle*; and afterwards he will present her unto his Father, at the delivering up of the kingdom, and place her at his own right hand. *On the right hand stood the queen in gold of Ophir.*

The first account we have in scripture of a *lamp* is in Gen. xv. 17. Abraham was commanded of God to take *an heifer, a she goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.* The beasts he divides in twain, but not the birds. *And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abraham*, which was followed with *an horror of great darkness. And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoaking furnace and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed I will give this land.* It is thought, by many, that the sufferings of Israel in Egypt were represented by this furnace, and their great deliverance by the lamp. But I believe the slain beasts prefigured Christ; Abraham's darkness and horror, the bondage and wrath of the law; the smoking furnace, the sufferings of Christ under man's crimes and God's wrath; the lamp, the glorious salvation that should follow

his crucifixion; for it is his death that ratifies and confirms the covenant of grace, and secures the heavenly country to all Abraham's mystical seed. And for this construction of the words we have the authority of the prophet Isaiah, who quotes this burning lamp, and applies it to the salvation of Christ. *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteous thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.* Isaiah lxii. 1.

The brightness, brilliancy, lustre, and glory, of this righteousness, spring from the glory of the great personage that wrought it out: it is the *righteousness of God.* Glory, and the rays of infinite divinity, attend it to every soul to whom it is imputed; and the time will come *when the righteous shall shine forth* (in it) *as the sun, in the glory of their Father's kingdom, for ever and ever.*

The salvation here mentioned is called *a lamp that burneth.* Salvation from guilt and filth, from fear and bondage, wrath, death, hell, and damnation, comes into the soul like a flaming torch; the sun of righteousness arises upon us with healing in his beams, and conveys such divine heat and everlasting light as shall never be quenched nor extinguished: and it is attended with such a flame of heavenly love as melts the soul, kindles in the breast, and makes the heart burn within us. This makes a man a burning and a shining light; yea, it makes a minister a flame of fire. In short, salvation by grace is a lamp that never goes out; for *we are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*

Some tell us that this lamp is a lamp of profession; but this is saying nothing, as we have no scripture that calls a profession by that name. The lamp, as above described, is the lamp which these wise

virgins

virgins took; had they taken any other, they had been just as foolish as the rest. Which leads me,

IV. To describe their *vessels*. By their vessels I understand their *hearts*; for religion without the heart is like the white of an egg without salt; it can be no more than bodily exercise, which profiteth nothing. If we draw near to God with our mouth, and honour him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, in vain we worship him; and to set off for heaven and dream of getting there, while our hearts are set on the things of time and sense, is going without a heart; for *where a man's heart is there is his treasure.* God promises to take away the stony heart out of our flesh, and to give us an heart of flesh: *Yea, a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will give them an heart to know me, for I will pardon them whom I reserve; and I will circumcise their hearts to love me, that they may live.*

Where there is no heart in religion, there is no faith, for *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*; and where there is no heart there is no Christ, for he dwells in the heart by faith; and without the heart there can be no grace, for grace is the hidden man of the heart.

Furthermore. God looks with compassion on them, and only them, that tremble at his word; nor will he dwell with any but those that are of a broken and a contrite heart, *to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.* A whole-hearted sinner needs not the physician; nor does the commission of Christ reach him, for he was sent *to bind up the broken-hearted.*

These wise virgins knew the deceitfulness, the bitterness, the treachery, and the plague of their own hearts; and they knew the change that God had made therein. Hence we may see that every thing which these wise virgins were, and all that

they

they had, came down from the Father of lights. They were all of them by nature ſinners, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; but God chaſtened them, and taught them out of his law, and then he drew them to Chriſt, that they might find reſt in him *till the pit be digged up for the wicked*; and Chriſt received them as his Father's gift: this entitled them to the name of *virgins*.

God revealed his ſon in them the hope of glory, and they had *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*: this made them *wiſe* virgins.

He gave them *the knowledge of ſalvation by the forgiveneſs of their ſins*, which was attended with a feeling ſenſe of the dying love of Chriſt, that, having much forgiven, they might love much: this was their *lamp*, and this made them *wiſe virgins with their lamps*.

God circumciſed their hearts to love him, and wrought faith in their hearts to believe in him for life and ſalvation: this raiſed their affections above, and ſent them out to meet the bridegroom; for where ſhould they be but where their hearts and treaſures were? They never ſet out in hope and expectation of meeting the bridegroom till they were furniſhed with thoſe things that would procure their reception, and make them meet for it. I come now,

V. To treat of their *oil*. The Jewiſh high prieſts, the prophet Eliſha, and the kings of Iſrael, were all anointed with oil to their offices by the command of God; and HE that is now our prophet, prieſt, and king, was anointed alſo, and that with the Holy Ghoſt without meaſure. The holy penman, in his account of the anointing of Chriſt, is very particular, as you read, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right ſceptre. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs and hateſt wickedneſs: there-*

fore

fore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows. Pſalm iv. 5, 6, 7. It is plain that the marriage of Chriſt is ſet forth in this pſalm. *All thy garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes and caſſia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.* Here is Chriſt, and a company in the ivory palaces making him glad; and next we have the church and her company mentioned; *King's daughters were among thy honourable women; upon thy right hand did ſtand the queen in gold of Ophir.* In the next place, he orders her to quit her father's houſe, and come forth to meet him: *Hearken, O daughter, and conſider, and incline thine ear; forget alſo thine own people, and thy father's houſe.* He then tells her what a kind reception ſhe ſhall meet with by ſo doing: *ſo ſhall the King greatly deſire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.* Next mention is made of more bridemaids, even from among the Gentiles; and ſome of the great ones of the earth, too, ſhall entreat the queen's favour: *And the daughter of Tyre ſhall be there with a gift, even the rich among the people ſhall entreat thy favour.* Now he applauds her: *The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.* And next comes her glorious admiſſion into the royal palace: *She ſhall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work:* and with her are brought the pure attendants that follow her, even the ſame perſons mentioned in my text: *The virgins her companions that follow her ſhall be brought unto thee, with gladneſs and rejoicing ſhall they be brought; they ſhall enter into the king's palace.* Pſalm xlv. Out of this pſalm, and the book of Proverbs, the Lord took this parable of the fooliſh and wiſe virgins. And it is beautiful to ſee the gradation that appears in this pſalm; for, firſt, here is the choſen ſpouſe ſet before Chriſt, at the ſight of whom he is much taken. 2. He is

anointed

anointed to be a prieſt, to redeem by his ſacrifice, and as a prophet to inſtruct her; and hence he calls upon her to hearken to him. 3. He is anointed to his kingly office, and tells her that the king greatly deſires her beauty, and then gives her the title of queen, ſuitable to his rank, and promiſes to bring her to his palace, and there to place her on his right hand. And theſe things were enforced with the moſt endearing affection, to induce her to quit her own family and father's houſe, and go forth to meet her bridegroom.

There were two things in the Saviour's view which rejoiced his heart when the oil of gladneſs was upon him; the one was, the day of his eſpouſals: *Go forth, O daughter of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his heart.*

The other thing was, the glory that was to be put upon his human nature at his aſcenſion to heaven, and the fulneſs of joy he was to have there. Hence you hear him ſpeaking: *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life: in thy preſence is fullneſs of joy; at thy right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* This was *the joy that was ſet before him*, for the which he *endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Now let us look at the *oil* of theſe wiſe virgins, and ſee what it is. Solomon makes this flaming oil of the wiſe to be *joy*. He tells us that the light of a juſt man burns with joy, when the light of the wicked is extinguiſhed: *The light of the righteous rejoiceth, when the lamp of the wicked ſhall be put out.*

And

And the prophet Iſaiah calls it *the oil of joy*; for, propheſying of Chriſt, and what he ſhould do when he came, he tells us that he ſhall *comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs; that they might be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.* Iſaiah lxi. 3. Hence it appears that the ſpiritual and heavenly joy, with which the Holy Spirit fills the new-born ſoul, is this oil which the wiſe virgins took in their veſſels. This appears ſtill more evident, becauſe it is oppoſed to mourning, and is promiſed to the mourners in Zion; and nothing can be more deſired by poor ſouls mourning under ſin than this joy of the Lord; yea, even the fooliſh virgins craved it when their lamps went out; *Give us of your oil.* Which verifies the ſaying of the wiſe man, *There is a treaſure to be deſired, and oil in the dwelling of the wiſe.* Prov. xxi. 20. And this proverb is fulfilled in my text, *for the wiſe had oil in their veſſels.*

We know that oil is a furious thing to burn; and ſure I am that nothing deſtroys grief, ſorrow, miſery, and mourning, more effectually than the joy of the Lord in the heart. This oil makes a man's face to ſhine, however fallen, ſickly, ſad, dejected, or gloomy, it might appear before.—Proſperity and joy, adverſity and penſive conſideration, are oppoſed to each other: *In the day of proſperity be joyful, in the day of adverſity conſider; God hath ſet the one againſt the other.* When our ſpiritual might abates, and our joys flag, we may propheſy as David did, *My horn ſhalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn; I ſhall be anointed with freſh oil.*

Moreover, oil is of a very predominant nature; put it into what you will, unleſs it mixes, it will

be

be uppermoſt ; and ſo the great felicity of heaven is ſet forth by it : *In his preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* According to Paul, joy is the ſecond fruit of the Holy Spirit of God : *Love, joy, peace.* Anointed with this oil, ſhall the ſons of God return to their father's houſe : *They ſhall come with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their head ; they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.* The Lord fill us with all joy and peace in believing.

Once more. What can fill the bridegroom's heart ſo much as joy; when he is going to take the deſire of his eyes home to himſelf ? Or what can fill the bride's heart but joy, when ſhe is going to the boſom of him who is ſupreme in her affections ? And how doth the ſcripture ſet this compariſon of, and interweave it with, the ſoul's eſpouſal to Chriſt ? *Thou ſhalt no more be termed forſaken ; neither ſhalt thy land any more be termed deſolate ; but thou ſhalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah ; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land ſhall be married. For, as a young man marrieth a virgin, ſo ſhall thy ſons marry thee ; and, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoice over thee.* Iſaiah lxii. 4, 5.

This oil of heavenly joy is an ineſtimable treaſure, and ſo it will appear to the wiſe whenever the midnight cry comes. When the children of this world will be in their greateſt ſecurity, buying, ſelling, building, planting, marrying wives and giving in marriage ; when all on a ſudden the archangel and the trump of God will alarm them all ; then, then to reflect upon the work of regeneration, and to look forward with a good hope through grace, and feel a love to his appearing ; to ſee and know that now is an end to all ſin and ſinning ; to all ſorrow, ſadneſs, and ſuffering ; and to have nothing

before

before us but eternal felicity, and the bridegroom coming to be admired in all that belive, and to receive the darling of his ſoul home to himſelf; this, this will make the oil burn brighter than ever. I now haſten to ſhew,

VI. How they fared at their journey's end. We are informed that *the bridegroom tarried*; he was not quite ſo quick in his motions as they were in their expectations; and perhaps the cauſe of this was, ſomebody had been too buſy in fixing the time of his coming, as many ſpeculators have been very forward at fixing the preciſe time for many events which God hath not revealed: beyond this time, limited by ſome and expected by others, the bridegroom tarried; *and they all ſlumbered and ſlept.* Faith was out of exerciſe, hope was not looking-out, nor expectation on her watch-tower: patience had no troubles to exerciſe it, love was grown cold, diligence was worn out, grace lay dormant, and all the ſenſes became drowſy; nothing awake but poor honeſt conſcience, and he was not attended to. *I ſleep, but my heart awaketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open to me, my ſiſter, my love.* Though the ſpouſe was aſleep, her heart was not; and, however dead aſleep, yet ſhe knew the voice of her beloved, and ſays, *It is the voice of my beloved that knocked.* Theſe words of the church Chriſt himſelf quotes: *Let your loins be girt about, and your lights burning; and ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching.* Luke xii. 36.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. At *Midnight* was this cry made. The creation of the world is called *morning*, and the angels who then ſang their

anthems are called *the morning ſtars that ſang together.* Job xxxviii. 7. The prophetic age is called *noon*, Amos viii. 9. In Chriſt's days it was called *ſupper time.* Luke xiv. 16, 17. But this cry is at the cloſe of time, and therefore called *midnight:* and there is an alluſion to the midnight cry in Egypt, when the firſt-born in every houſe lay dead, and Iſrael all in perfect ſafety, *who kept the paſſover and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born ſhould touch them.*

However, God will always have ſome watchmen on the walls of Zion to give the time of the night, as was the caſe here; there were ſome that cried the hour even at *midnight*, for at that time the cry was made: ſurely *God will not do any thing, but he revealeth his ſecret to his ſervants the prophets.*

Before the flood, Noah was let into the ſecret of the deluge. Before the deſtruction of Sodom, Abraham firſt, and then Lot, was appriſed of it. To the deſtruction that came upon Egypt Moſes was privy. Jeremiah was informed of the duration of Iſrael's captivity in Babylon. Daniel was informed when the Meſſiah would come. And both Daniel and the Meſſiah himſelf gave many broad hints of Jeruſalem's deſolation. And ſo likewiſe of the day of judgment, ſome watchmen will be informed of that, leſt the Lord, coming ſuddenly, ſhould find his ſpouſe ſleeping.

Behold, the bridegroom cometh. This watch-word was not given to the world, for he is not a bridegroom to them; the warning was given to Zion, and to the inhabitants of that city; and they, and only they took the warning, and were alarmed and rouſed up by it.

Then all thoſe virgins aroſe and trimmed their lamps. The fooliſh, as well as the wiſe, being in communion one with another, received the warning. But I ſhall not take notice of them at this time.

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The wife *trimmed their lamps:* by which it appears that their evidences were begloomed, and their spirits dull; the grace of God in their hearts, and their past experiences, much obscured; their lights very dim, and their love cold; much sin unconfessed and unrepented of, and the great day of accounts put far away. But this cry alarmed them, and awakened all their fears about them: their backslidings reproved them, their base ingratitude stared them in the face; and their carelessness and cold indifference terrified them. This led them to self-examination, and that led them to humble confession: fear moved them, and prayers were fervently put up for pardon, peace, and a revival of the work; when a fresh application of the atonement was applied, meekness and humility were granted, and they restored to the joys of his salvation, and furnished and upheld by his free spirit. They saw that their guilt was purged, and their wedding garment on; truth was about their loins, and love in their hearts; the Spirit's witness within, aud a serene heaven without; faith in exercise, and hope in vigour: and, being thus ready prepared, as a bride adorned for her husband, they cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!*

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. This marriage is not in heaven, or in ultimate glory; for Christ at this time comes to raise the dead who died in faith, and to change the saints that shall at this time be found alive upon earth; and, when the one is changed, and the other raised, they enter into the heavenly Jerusalem, which at this time will be let down out of heaven from God. *They will mount up to meet the Lord in the air*; when he will burn the world, and all the wicked in it, as he did Sodom and Gomorrah; and then *create all things new.—The elements shall melt, and the heavens pass away with*

a great noise; the earth, and all her works, shall be burnt up, and a new heaven and a new earth appear, agreeable to his promise, *where dwelleth righteousness.* This will be the last jubilee, and the last sabbath; and now shall *the meek inherit the earth, and the elect long enjoy the work of their hands*; for they will, in this state, outlive all the antediluvians; for *they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years.* This will appear a heavenly country, and Zion *a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.* This will be *the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city,* and the camp of the saints; and the thousand years rest that remains to the people of God, of which the sabbath was a sign; and here we shall rest from our works, as God did from his. At this time we shall meet all the flock: this will be *the General assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.* And the close of the thousand years the wicked shall be raised and judged; and, when banished and imprisoned, the saints will ascend to ultimate glory, the scaffold will be struck, and time will be no more; but heaven will be the saints' final home, and God will be all in all.

Now suffer a word of counsel and advice. As the midnight cry in Egypt was emblematical of this midnight cry at the end of the world, so God's direction to Israel will serve as a guide to us. Israel was a typical people, and prefigured the whole Israel of God; they were all the sons of God by national adoption: *Israel is my son, my first-born; let my son go, that he may serve me:* and, as such, they represented all the sons of God, who were predestinated to the adoption of children; which preadoption is manifested to them at their believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every household of Israel was to take a lamb; and every little congregation belonging to the household

hold of faith muſt by faith take hold of the lamb of God; and this lamb, our paſſover ſacrificed for us, muſt be eaten; his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. This ſacrifice is a ſweet entertainment for a reſtleſs, diſquieted ſoul, who hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs, life, pardon, peace, reconciliation with God, and eternal ſalvation; and will nouriſh faith and hope: it will ſatisfy a barren, empty, periſhing mind; and quiet, compoſe, and becalm an accuſing conſcience, and gratify it to the higheſt degree. This lamb was to be roaſted with fire; and the faith of a believer ſees and feels the curſe, the burning ire and ſmoaking jealouſy, of a ſin-avenging God revealed in a fiery law, poured forth upon the Lamb of God, who ſuffered in the room and ſtead of his people; ſo that he is redeemed from the wrath to come, and delivered from going down to the pit, by the life of Chriſt, laid down a ranſom for many. The blood of the lamb was to be put upon the two ſideoſts, and upon the upper-door-poſt of the houſes. Chriſt does condeſcend to viſit his elect, while we dwell in the houſes of theſe our earthly tabernacles, and demands entrance by the everlaſting doors of our hearts; and when the King of glory comes in, he not only puts a little ſweet-ſmelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock, but with this bleſſed atonement he ſprinkles the heart from an evil conſcience; which ſaving benefit being applied, procures his admittance ever after, and makes his company ſo deſirable. This ſacrifice was to be eaten with unleavened bread, which Paul ſays is *ſincerity and truth.* Sincerity is oppoſed to hypocriſy, and truth to falſehood; hypocriſy, malice, and wickedneſs, is called old leaven. *And thus ſhall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your ſhoes on your feet, and your ſtaff in your hand. The truth* (as it is in Chriſt) *received in the love of it,* and with it *the love of the*

truth, or the love that God promiſes in the word of truth to reveal in us, is, according to Paul, the ſaint's girdle: *having your loins girt about with truth.* The loins of the mind being girded up, keeps from a looſe and ſcandalous profeſſion, and from embracing the damnable lies and hereſies that abound in our day. To walk humbly with Chriſt, and to enjoy peace in him, and in our own conſcience, is *having our feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace.* The ſtaff muſt be in our hand. Chriſt, in his office of a ſhepherd, has his *ſtaff*; and, as king of Zion, he hath his *rod*, or ſceptre; of which David ſpeaks. *The Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want*, for I am a ſheep of his paſture; *the Lord is my king, working ſalvation in the midſt of the earth*; and he will magnify this ſtaff by his tender care of me, and ſhew himſelf worthy of *a right ſceptre* by deſtroying my enemies and defending me. *I will fear no evil, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.* This ſtaff is the goſpel, which is the power of God to ſalvation, and by which mighty power we are kept through faith. But the lamb muſt be eaten with bitter herbs; *with bitter herbs ſhall they eat it.* Theſe are not palatable, but profitable; they are not intended to fill the belly, but to purge and ſtrengthen the ſtomach. When bitter trials ceaſe we get lifeleſs; and when lifeleſs, Satan gets little injury, and God gets but little glory. The only remedy againſt ſlumbering and ſleeping is diligence and watchfulneſs; for all the time we are diligent our ſouls gather fatneſs, and God is glorified, which is what Satan cannot bear. It is when the ſoul is preſſing forward to Jeſus, that Satan buffets him; and it is when he would do good that evil is preſent with him. Let his diligence abate, and Satan is undiſturbed; let him ceaſe to do good, and the old man will not ſo ſtrongly annoy him: this brings on ſlumbering and ſleeping, the offence of the croſs is ceaſed.

A worſe

A worſe ſlaughter than that of Egypt will be made at the midnight cry; I mean among thoſe who will be found in their firſt-born ſtate. Let us, therefore, keep the paſſover and the ſprinkling of blood.

Again—Iſrael was to abide in their houſes; and the ſaint ſhould abide in the houſe of God, for there the midnight cry will firſt be made, and there the warning be firſt given. Once more—At this paſſover Iſrael was to begin to reckon time; it was to be the beginning of months unto them; and at the laſt midnight cry ſuffering time, ſinning time, the devil's time, and the time of ſinners plaguing the ſaints, will be over; and a whole thouſand years complete will take place, and run out, before Satan and his adherents come forth to judgment. They ſhall all be in priſon during this term, while Chriſt will reign before all the antediluvian and poſtdiluvian ſaints, and that in a glorious manner; for ſo it is written: *The earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and ſhall be removed like a cottage, and the tranſgreſſion thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall and not riſe again. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the Lord ſhall puniſh the hoſt of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they ſhall be gathered together as priſoners are gathered in the pit, and ſhall be ſhut up in the priſon; and after many days ſhall they be viſited. Then the moon ſhall be confounded, and the ſun aſhamed, when the Lord of Hoſts ſhall reign in mount Zion, and in Jeruſalem, and before his ancients glorioufly.* Iſa. xxiv. 20, 21, 22, 23. God grant we may be found among this number.....AMEN.

THE

THE FOOLISH VIRGINS DESCRIBED.

SERMON II.

MATT. XXV. 3.

THEY THAT WERE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS, AND TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM.

SOME time ago I gave you a discourse upon the *wise* virgins, and now I will endeavour to give you a description of the *foolish* ones, that you may see the difference between them, and judge for yourselves which class you belong to.

Such scriptural accounts of hypocrites as these which described their setting out in a profession, the name *virgin* being given to them, their taking their *lamps* as well as the wise, the shew that they made in their profession, their constant company with the righteous, the length to which they run, and their continuance in their course, even till the midnight cry proclaimed the day of judgement at hand, and even then to awake and begin to trim their lamps, expecting to be admitted into the marriage chamber as well as the others; when, instead of that, they were sent away as workers of iniquity: such accounts as these, I say, are very trying to young Christians. I see more and more the need of deep and heart-searching preaching in our days, for we swarm with professors: but what are they? They know not what they hear in the general, nor in what they believe. The *fan*, therefore, must come, and will come, to purge the floor.

About seven years ago I was much exercised in soul, for many months. Scenes of calamities and troubles were continually before me, and destruction in various forms. After having carried this heavy burden for six or seven months, it wore off a lit-

a little; *God speaketh once, yea twice; but man perceiveth it not.*

At length the present war broke out, about which I have had many night visions. These things led me to search the scriptures, and to seek the face of our heavenly Father, by prayer and supplication, for a little instruction in these things. It appears to me, that one of the heaviest times that ever fell upon Christendom, the most universal and the sharpest, is now before us. It may not last long; and it may lead on to the last conflict that ever mount Zion will have with the children of men.

This is mentioned in Daniel: *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even at that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* Dan. xii. 1. Whatever sufferings fell upon the Jews under Antichus, or whatever they suffered in their last desolations by the Romans, it is my opinion that this text hath never had its full accomplishment yet; and for this reason, because it is mentioned by John in his Revelations, which book was (I believe) written after Jerusalem's destruction. The words are these: *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Rev. iii. 10. Now this cannot have reference to the Jews, which were at this time dispersed: and, besides, these things were sent to the seven churches in Asia. If the time of trouble mentioned in Daniel had been fully accomplished by Antiochus, it would not have been repeated here as something yet to come; and, if it had been fulfilled in Jerusalem's desolation, it would not have been revealed as a prophecy to the Gentile churches in Asia. Nor do I believe that this

this ſtorm ever fell, with all its weight, upon any one of thoſe ſeven churches to which theſe epiſtles were ſent; but that it is ſomething yet to come.

However, there is ſome conſolation to the children of God in both theſe paſſages; for *at that time Michael ſhall ſtand up.* He will not be a careleſs or an inſenſible ſpectator: he will ſtand up, as he did at the martyrdom of Stephen, and exert his power in the behalf of thoſe who ſuffer for his ſake; for, if he be preſent, yea, *a very preſent help in time of trouble,* much more ſo in this time of trouble, which is to be ſuch as never hath been ſince the world began. And he is *the great prince which ſtandeth for the children of Daniel's people*; by which is meant, not the Jews, but the people of God's covenant, as Daniel was; and his ſort of people, real believers, and brethren in the faith, being the ſpiritual children of Abraham according to the promiſe. *Michael ſtands up for theſe*; to ſupport them, to give ſtrength according to the day; to regulate the heat of the furnace; to ſtay the rough wind in the day of the eaſt wind; to let the rage of his enemies out, and to reſtrain the remainder of their wrath; to give them preſence of mind in times of trial; to furniſh them with wiſdom how to act; and to make a way for their eſcape; for it is ſaid, that *at that time thy people ſhall be delivered, even every one that ſhall be found written in the book.* Dan. xii. 1. God's elect ſhall be delivered, whoſe names are written in the Lamb's book of life, ſlain from the foundation of the world. And, with this account in Daniel, John agrees in his revelation about the deliverance of God's elect: *And, becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation,* &c. The word of Chriſt's patience is the goſpel; keeping of it is believing in it, holding it faſt, and abiding by it, in the face of all oppoſition, and endeavours of the wicked to wreſt it out of our hands.

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1. It seems by this as if those who walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully, and those that are hypocrites in their profession, and mere formalists, will suffer a little, if not the most, in this perilous hour. And no wonder, for such persons are often the most secure; and this storm will fall very suddenly, for Christ, who threatens it, immediately adds, *Behold, I come quickly*, (Rev. iii. 11); that is, I come quickly to inflict this punishment.

2. The righteous are, in some measure, in God's secrets, but the wicked are not. God will give his people some notice of it, as he did to his disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, that they might flee from it, while the rest fled to Jerusalem for safety, and perished with the city. Moreover, this time of the most perilous and dreadful struggle is called an hour, a very short time, perhaps not a month; in which the Lord may hide his own in this day of his fierce anger: *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them.* Those that keep the word of his patience are called the *few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments: they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

That which is to lead on, and pave the way, to this trying hour, is scattering the power of the righteous: *And, when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.* Dan. xii. 7. By this power is meant, not the power of God, for who can scatter that? By this power I understand the strength and power of human laws, which keep the nations in order, and the wicked in awe, and which tolerate and protect those that fear God in their worship unmolested; and when these fences are broken down, and this power scattered, we know what must be expected.

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he lifted up his right hand,

hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and ſware by him that liveth for ever, that it ſhall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he ſhall have accompliſhed to ſcatter the power of the holy people, all theſe things ſhall be finiſhed. Dan. xii. 7. The man clothed in linen is Chriſt in his prieſtly habit. The duration of Zion's ſuffering under Antichriſt is to be a time, times, and half a time; which, in the prophetic ſtyle, is three years and a half, or one thouſand two hundred and ſixty years. And it appears that when theſe years are run out, or nearly ſo, the power of the holy people ſhall be ſcattered, and this perilous hour ſhall come on; and this, with the ſlaughter of the witneſſes, will be the end of Zion's ſufferings by the hand of the wicked, and the laſt triumph of her enemies; and of this we are aſſured by the promiſe and oath of Chriſt himſelf. Now we muſt go to John.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel ſtood, ſaying, Meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worſhip therein. Here John, or thoſe miniſters whom he perſonated, is ordered to take the word of God, and to deſcribe a real church, the altar, and the uſe of it, and the real ſpiritual worſhippers of God. By the temple I underſtand the church at large; by the altar, Chriſt, and the uſe that muſt be made of him by all believers; and by the worſhippers to deſcribe the true from the falſe. An alluſion is here made to the temple at Jeruſalem, on the outſide of which was a cloiſtered walk, called *the court of the Gentiles:* next to this, and in the temple, was the large court which held the national church of the Jews; next to this was the ſanctuary, where was the altar of burnt-offering, and where the prieſts entered to perform their ſervice; and next to this the holieſt of all. Now, under the goſpel, all real believers are called *a royal prieſthood:* yea, they

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are made *kings and prieſts unto God.* The temple was a type of the whole viſible profeſſing church; in which there are ſome real worſhippers, who are prieſts in the ſanctuary; ſome national worſhippers, who worſhip with their bodies only, and are graceleſs and undevout worſhippers; and without this court is the court of the Gentiles, the papiſts. The outward court is not to be meaſured, becauſe the Gentiles, who are in the cloiſtered walk, are to have it. *But the court which is without the temple leave out* (caſt out), *and meaſure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles.* Rev. ix. 2. This outward court I take to mean proteſtants who are unregenerate men, let them be of what ſect, name, or party, they may, whether churchmen or diſſenters: theſe are given to the Gentiles, they are ranked among the papiſts, and will be gained over to them. And, as to the ſpiritual worſhippers, the real citizens of mount Zion, they ſhall trample upon them: *And the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty and two months.* Here Daniel's three years and a half are called forty and two months, which I beleive mean the ſame length of time. This is the whole time of Zion's ſuffering under the man of ſin; but when they began, or when they will end, I know not; the viſion will ſpeak in time. During this term of years the goſpel ſhall be preached notwithſtanding all the oppoſition made againſt it; for ſo it follows: *And I will give power unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall propheſy a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth.* Rev. xi. 3.

And, when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony; when Daniel's time, times, and an half; when the forty and two months; when the one thouſand two hundred and ſixty years are expired; then their teſtimony ſhall be finiſhed; and then *the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit ſhall make war*

againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them. Rev. xi. 7. This will be Daniel's *time of trouble;* the prophets' laſt mourning days; the laſt furnace that men will heat for Zion, and Antichriſt's laſt triumphant feſtival. This killing of them doth not mean ſo much the murdering of them as the ſilencing or ſlaying of them in their miniſtry, or as miniſters; ſo that the word of life ſhall not be held forth by them as witneſſes of God; for ſo it follows: *And their dead bodies ſhall lie in the ſtreet of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where alſo our Lord was crucified.* Rev. xi. 8. This ſhews, that, wherever theſe witneſſes are, there they will be ſlain or ſilenced; and, as the place where they lay dead is called the ſtreet of the great city, it is plain that the countries where the witneſſes lay muſt be gained over to the Roman church, or elſe they cannot, with any propriety, be called *the ſtreets of that great city.*

The time that they are to lie ſilenced, or dead, as witneſſes, is three years and a half. *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and a half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.* By theſe two prophets I underſtand miniſters and churches (read Rev. xi. 4); for the churches are the ground and pillar of what the prophets preached, or the living epiſtles of what the prophets wrote. It ſeems farther evident that this myſtical ſlaughter of the witneſſes will be univerſal, wherever they are, becauſe different people, kindreds, tongues, and nations, ſhall ſee them; and ſhall make merry, ſend gifts, and rejoice on this occaſion.

This, as before ſaid, will be Zion's laſt trouble,

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and the hypocrite's laſt triumph; for ſo it follows: *And, after three days and a half, the ſpirit of life from God entered into them, and they ſtood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that ſaw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.* The Spirit of God inſpires them afreſh for their great work, and they aſcend into a ſtate of heavenly-mindedneſs, and appear again as a cloud of witneſſes for God: and now Babylon falls; *and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt; and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15.

Now here are two different times of ſuffering mentioned. The one the ſlaughter of the witneſſes, which will laſt three years and a half; the other, *the hour of temptation, which is to come upon all the world to try them.* Now I take theſe two ſcenes of ſuffering to be diſtinct things, and to come on at two diſtinct periods, for the following reaſons; namely, from the hour of temptation thoſe are to be kept who keep the word of Chriſt's patience; and the world is to be tried; yea, all that dwell upon earth ſhall be tried: whereas, in the ſlaughter of the witneſſes, the people of God are to ſuffer, and the world are to rejoice, make merry, and ſend gifts to one another. And there is alſo a difference in the duration of theſe two ſuffering ſeaſons; the one is called *an hour*, the other *three years and a half.* But what this trying hour is, or when the heavieſt of it will come on, is unknown, though the thing itſelf hath been in a meaſure revealed by ſome already, and will be revealed more plainly to them who have kept the word of his patience; but to the whole crowd of profeſſors at large I believe it will be hid, and will fall upon them when they are moſt ſecure. *If, therefore,*

therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Rev. iii. 3.

It is not easy to tell in what part of scripture the late revolution in France, and the dreadful war that succeeds it, stands. No commentator, that I have seen, has described it: some, in our day, have thought that this was the earthquake and the down-fall of the tenth part of the city mentioned in Rev. xi. 13; but that cannot be (though it may be an earnest of it), for the witnesses must be slain, and lie three years and a half, and rise, and ascend, ere that earthquake comes on; for so it is written: *And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them; and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell,* &c. Rev. xi. 12, 13.

We have more need to fear a certain army in the bowels of our own country, than all the combined forces on the frontiers: the damnable heresies of every sort that are revived and spread in the open face of the Sun of Righteousness; the hourly insults that are offered to the dignity and majesty of his highest nature, and all the perfections of it; the daily elopements of women from their husbands, and the unclean spirit of whoredom that so universally reigns and rules among the higher class of people, who ought to set an example to the lower ranks; the numberless swarms of professors, who have no more than a form of godliness, and who hate the power thereof; the many upstarts and presumptuous pretenders which have lately appeared in public, and the deluded multitudes which have been led astray by them; the presumption of some who have pretended to take the Jews to the land of Canaan; the daring pretensions of other novices to convert them; the universal clamours of the call and commission of others to convert

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the heathen nations, without any account given to the Chriſtian world of their own converſion, much leſs of their call or commiſſion from God to ſuch a work. Another thing which I fear is, the threatened ſtroke of heaven upon the oppreſſor. The laſt hard froſt gave the coal merchant his opportunity of grinding the face of the poor to the uttermoſt; which will never be forgotten in the days of this generation. The year following *the whole ſtaff of life* was confined in the hands of the farmer, the monopoliſt, the mealman, and the miller, who exhibited ſuch unparalleled hardneſs of heart, covetouſneſs, and cruel oppreſſion, as is not to be found in the annals of time. *But will not God viſit for theſe things, and ſhall not his ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* Yea, he will; *for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience.* I have run on here till I have almoſt loſt myſelf and my text too. I was to deſcribe the fooliſh virgins; and I believe there never were greater numbers of this ſort in a profeſſion than in the preſent day; and ſurely never was there leſs of the pure goſpel preached, nor leſs faithful dealing than at this time; for it appears to me that the whole work of the greateſt part of our preſent preachers is to collect, varniſh, and ornament, juſt ſuch virgins as thoſe in my text, and nothing elſe; and, in handling theſe words, I will endeavour to deſcribe them in the following manner:

I. Treat of their *virginity*.
II. Of their *folly*.
III. Their *lamps*.
IV. The *blaze* they made. And,
Laſtly, The cauſe of their going out.

Firſt, I am to treat of their *virginity*. It ſeems that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is determined that no ſoul ſhall ever be a loſer by him; all that follow him ſhall gain ſomething; and they generally gain what

they seek after: *None shall kindle a fire upon his altar, or shut his doors for nought.* Many followed him formerly for the loaves and fishes, and they were fed twice; many, in our days, follow him for nothing else but to get business, and they succeed. Some follow him from a real sense of their need of his mercy; and, when they have got that, they follow him in faith and affection; and these get both the kingdom of heaven, and all other necessaries into the bargain; and many follow him only to get a religious name, and such obtain it. The antediluvian professors, who married the daughters of Cain, were called, on account of their profession, *the sons of God.* The thousands that passed over the sea of Tiberius after Jesus, were called his disciples: *Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* Judas obtained both a title and a fiddle; the name of an apostle, and an empty gift: *He took part of this ministry with us,* says Peter. Now, as all these have gained something by trading, it can hardly be thought that the fools in my text should go altogether unrewarded. No, no. *Virgins* they are called, and that by the Son of God himself. There is certainly something glorious, heavenly, and honourable, in real godliness, or else the worst of creatures would never wish to imitate it. The devil himself sees something so beautiful in God, and in his glorious perfections, that he has always tried to imitate him, just as a monkey does a man; and has had more human worshippers and admirers than ever God had; yea, we read of *the devil and his angels*; so that he has got angelic adorers as well as human; and he has obtained the name of a god, for he is called the *god of this world:* and sometimes he tries to transform himself into the likeness of an angel of light: and, as Satan tries to mimic God, so his children try to mimic the saints. Hence the fools in my text are called virgins; and every whore in

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London would like to be called, and to be thought, the ſame. But God hath ſet ſuch a brand of infamy on their foreheads, that nothing under heaven, but evangelical repentance can ever deface it.

The name *virgin*, of right, belongs to the real ſpouſe of Chriſt; and here it is given only on the account of a profeſſion. They had nothing but the name, not the thing ſignified by it; by name they were *virgins*, in religion *fools*, and by practice *workers of iniquity*; and ſuch the Judge calls them when he bids them depart from him. A profeſſor of godlineſs and a worker of iniquity is as great a contradiction in terms as an undefiled whore. Spiritual virginity lies in a ſoul's holding itſelf not its own, but ſacred to its only and eternal lover; barring the heart, mind, affections and judgment, againſt all rivals and bold intruders; preſerving all its charms, ſuch as the ſtrongeſt affections, ſecret receſſes of the mind, moſt earneſt deſires, choiceſt praiſes, ſtable confidence, ſweeteſt words, and firmeſt truſt, for the ſervice of the beſt beloved, and none elſe: *Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.* But the virginity of this fool lies only in name, in outward ſhew, and in word; they kept their carcaſſes out of the world, but not their hearts; they joined themſelves to the ſaints, but they were never of one ſpirit with them; they went forth to meet the bridegroom with their feet, but never walked by faith; they learnt to talk of Jeſus as the ſaints did, and as a parrot learns to ſpeak man's word's; and the parrot knows juſt as much what it means as theſe fools did of the Lord Jeſus; for he tells them at laſt, *Depart from me, I know ye not*; and, if he did not know them, it is not likely that they ſhould know much of him. Which leads me to conſider,

II. Their *folly* or *foolishneſs*. Theſe fools were not idiots; for ſuch perſons have not ſenſe enough

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to act the part of an hypocrite in so complete a manner as these did, even to deceive the wise virgins themselves, until the midnight cry undeceived them. Nor can these fools mean persons of weak capacities, for the same reason: an arch hypocrite, in the general, is a cunning, subtle, sharp, keen, crafty person, as Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias, Ahithophel, &c. These virgins are called fools on a religious account, because they deceived themselves, and were deceived; and because they took so much pains to gain an empty name, which only at last entitled them to the greater condemnation, which is threatened to an hypocrite in Zion; or else their foolishness lay in their certain expectation of heaven in their own thoughts, when of all fools they were the farthest from it.

A fool in religion is one that is ignorant of the corruption of his own nature; of the enmity, rebellion, deceit, and hypocrisy, of his own heart; of his being destitute of all righteousness, holiness, wisdom, strength, and power, either to will or to act for God; he is ignorant of the sting of death that is in his heart, and of the strong man armed that keeps his soul in a false peace; and therefore he never was chased out of his refuges of lies; he is in covenant with death, and with hell at an agreement, and rests carnally secure in flesh and blood: and *he that trusts in his own heart is a fool.*

In all this fool's profession there is no self-examination, no diving into the heart and conduct, no pondering over, or reflecting upon, the long black list of crying crimes that lie behind; and in all his hearing there is no appropriation; he is charmed with the sound, as some horses are with a fiddle; and the more noise the more music. The sword of God makes no incision in him, reproof and rebuke make no impression on him; he hears the letter by the preacher's voice, and, with a feigned faith, and

incarnal

incarnal security, he reclines himself upon it. *Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.* This fool never felt the burden of sin and the wrath of God sink him, and therefore never searched deep to feel for the rock to rest his burdened soul upon; it is a dead soul, resting upon that which is a savour of death unto death.

There are none more certain, or more at a point, than this fool. To attempt to convince him, counsel him, or to undeceive him, is pulling him down from his excellency; and you may just as well turn a swine as persuade him: he sees his way clear, he knows where he is going, and where he shall end; *the way of a fool is right in his own eyes*, if it be wrong in the eyes of every body else.

Wisdom asserts that the confidence of this fool is as strong as his way is right: he is not one that is given to stagger; few fits of incredulity fall to his share; and no wonder, for his faith is never tried; he walks boldly, and well he may, for against him there is no rising up. He has neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil, to cope with. Not the world, for that loves its own; not the flesh, for his confidence is in it; not the devil, for he is the author and finisher of this faith; and he is not divided against himself. If his confidence meets with any checks, it is now and then brought on by a stroke from the lips of the righteous: this sometimes touches him a little; and this he highly resents, and calls it making the righteous sad, whom God would not have made sad; such are not builders up, but destroyers of God's heritage: and he deems it the effects of a bad spirit, of narrowness, of pride, of bigotry, and contraction of soul; and, in order to keep all light

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and conviction out, and to fortify himself against all truth and equity, he storms till he has silenced his adversary, and contends with the more violence for his full assurance of faith; fully persuaded in his own mind that no legal bondage, fear, trial, or trouble, will ever move him; his heart is fixed; and he daringly persisteth in his presumption. *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but the fool rageth and is confident.* Prov. xiv. 16.

This fool often deceives the simple by a collection of such general terms as are peculiar to religious characters: the words truth, righteousness, faith, experience, grace, the Spirit of God, the old man, temptations, persecution, good hope, the fear of God, election, the gospel, the trial of faith, the inward man, the children of God, the promises, the covenant of grace, sanctification, justification, the saints' final perseverance, progressive work, instantaneous work, the good work of grace, the buffetings and conflicts of God's people, &c. when he knows not what he means by any one of these phrases; nor can he explain, define, or clear, one of them. But poor, simple souls, who are used to gospel language, they hear and find that these are such terms as they have been used to; and therefore swallow them down, and admire his sound speech, and his experience, only because they hear the names of these things mentioned; but, when troubled souls come to seek unto him to solve their doubts and fears, they find the voice to be Jacob's voice, but the heart and hands both belong to Esau. *Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince.*

The whole work of this fool lies in one single branch of exercise, and that is, *the talk of the lips.*— Self-denial the daily cross, the furnace of affliction, the perpetual warfare between flesh and spirit, the plague of the heart, the stirrings of corruption, the hiding

hiding of God's face, legal bondage, doubts and fears of miſcarrying, never trouble him; he eats the lamb without the bitter herbs, and drinks his wine without mingling; his days are proſperity, not adverſity; his ſoul knows its own joy, but not its own bitterneſs; his heart is in the houſe of feaſting, not mourning; his religion lies all in his mouth, as cathedral worſhip does in an organ; it is all wind muſic: *For a dream cometh through a multitude of buſineſs, and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words.*

The fool is bomb proof againſt all the artillery of a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt; no bow bends him, no arrow enters his reins; no weapons, however mighty, bring down his imaginations, nor any high thing in him that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God; no thoughts of his heart are brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt; Satan keeps full poſſeſſion of his palace, and God the Saviour lets Satan hold his own: *he is joined to idols; let him alone.* The hammer of truth never ſmites him, the fire of God never melts him, the ſword of the ſpirit never pierces him, the incarnate word never ſearches his heart, nor tries his reins; all attempts at his conſcience is beating the air, getting one's ſelf a blot, or braying a fool in a mortar; for a preſumptuous ſinner thus ſwoln and puffed up with pride, ſeated in the ſcorner's chair, and hardened in perilous preſumption, is ſeared with a hot iron, and paſt feeling. Hence the ſcriptures repreſent one word in a living ſoul to have more effect than a flogging at a cart's tail hath with a callous hypocrite: *A reproof entereth more into a wiſe man than an hundred ſtripes into a fool.*

The folly of this fool is further deſcribed by his inverting all truth, and acting counter to all the paths of it, and to all the pillars and grounds of it. Hence Paul tells us that the Galatians were bewitched,

witched, that they ſhould not obey the truth, but lies; that another goſpel and another ſpirit ſuited them beſt; and poor Paul became their enemy, and they of courſe hated him, for telling them the truth. Theſe were wiſe men; they ſubmitted to circumciſion, that the croſs of Chriſt might profit them nothing; they went over to the law to be juſtified by the works of it; and, having begun in the ſpirit, or with the diſpenſation of the goſpel, they were going to perfect the ſame by the works of the fleſh. This was a way that ſeemed right in their own eyes, but the end thereof is the way of death. From this the apoſtle tried to diſſuade them; but he was their enemy, and truth was the cauſe of it. Thoſe who preached another goſpel, and influenced them with another ſpirit, were the men: thoſe that Paul wiſhed to be cut off for troubling them, were their only comforters. Truth was error; the goſpel became a handmaid to the law; the work of the Spirit led to the perfection of the fleſh; juſtification by faith was to lead them to the law to complete the work of righteouſneſs; and falling from grace was to be the completion of life; and rendering Chriſt unprofitable to them was the only way to gain by trading. *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the truth!*

The fool in my text is one that is very fond of diſplaying his own abilities, that he may appear to be as wiſe in the eyes of others as he is in his own conceit: and we ſeldom read of one fool contending with another, for this would hurt the common cauſe, which every fool is under ſome obligation or other to ſupport. The antagoniſt of this fool is, in the general, ſome poor, ſimple ſoul or other, that loves and fears God; and if, by brow-beating, an inch of ground can be gained over one of this ſtamp, this is a feather in his cap. *The fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for ſtrokes.* I ſhall now

Conſider

Conſider the *lamp* of this fool. *They took their lamps and went forth*, &c. They did not all take one and the ſame ſort of *lamps*: the wiſe took the lamps that were peculiar to them, and the fooliſh took the lamps that were peculiar to them; as at a Jewiſh wedding, every one took his own lamp or torch. I proved, in my laſt diſcourſe, from the prophet Iſaiah, that *ſalvation is a lamp that burneth*: but no fool ever took this; if he did, it would never go out; for we are ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation, and ſhall not be aſhamed or confounded world without end. This lamp we receive from the Saviour, and it is given to the daughters of Zion. *The Lord hath choſen Zion; this is my reſt for ever. I will abundantly bleſs her proviſion, and ſatisfy her poor with bread. There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine annointed. His enemies will I clothe with ſhame; but upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.* Pſalm cxxxii. 16, 17, 18.

The lamp that the fooliſh virgins took is the law: *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.* Prov. vi. 23. Salvation by grace is the lamp of the wiſe, and the law is the lamp of the fool. When God writes his law of faith on the ſinner's heart by his Spirit, and puts his fear within him; when he appears to be merciful to his unrighteouſneſs, and to remember his ſin no more; this is his lamp; he takes it, and in faith and love goes forth to meet the bridegroom. And, on the other hand, the fool who has got *the works of the law* (as Paul ſays) *written on his heart*, he muſt of courſe go forth with this, for he has no other. The works of the law are written in his heart, and all the dreadful contents of the law are in him; the curſe, the wrath, the fear, the bondage, and the torment of the law are in him; only, being carnally ſecure, and dead in ſin, he neither knows it nor feels it.

Hence you read, *The curſe of God is in the tabernacle of the wicked. He that believes not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.* Bondage, fear, and torment are in him; love never made him free, then he muſt be bound: love never caſt fear and torment out of him, then they muſt be in him.

The alarms of heaven have not rouſed his conſcience; no army of terrors have awakened him; the ſtrong man armed keeps poſſeſſion of the palace, and his goods are in peace. He was drawn by love, but never chaſtened; he is reconciled to God, though he never felt his enmity; he loves the Lord, though he never knew what it was to hate him; he believes, but never felt himſelf ſhut up in unbelief: this is the new wine put into the old bottle, and the new cloth put upon the old garment. He rages and is confident in his life; and it ſometimes happens that he has no bands in his death, but his ſtrength is firm; his life and his lamp both go out together: *Yea, the light of the wicked ſhall be put out, and the ſpark of his fire ſhall not ſhine. The light ſhall be dark in his tabernacle, and his lamp ſhall be put out with him.* Job xviii. 5, 6. One bleſſed effect of the new birth is to clear the ſoul of bondage, fear, wrath, and torment: and the other is to make it meet for heaven. But a man feels no more the wrath and bondage of the law than he does of his own guilt, ſin, and miſery, till he is alarmed, awakened, and quickened, by the Spirit of God. And how ſhocking muſt that ſinner's ſtate be, whoſe ſoul is daubed over with a profeſſion, while all theſe dreadful combuſtibles lie at the bottom undiſcovered and unſuſpected. This is healing the wound ſlightly. But the midnight cry alarms the fool, and ſtirs all his army of terrors up, and out goes his lamp,

and

and all the blackneſs and darkneſs of Sinai ſucceed. I come now

To ſpeak a little of the blaze that theſe fools made before their lamps went out, for their going out preſuppoſes that there was ſomething of a light. This light I take to be a little head knowledge, which at times greatly pleaſes the fool, and of which he is ſwoln with pride: *Knowledge puffeth up.*— Hence you read of ſome that *rejoiced in John's light for a ſeaſon;* and of others who *heard the word, and anon with joy received it.* Their paſſions were moved; their natural affections were ſtirred up and drawn forth, and with much glee it was received, and they rejoiced in it; and well they might, for they felt no wounds. The word was not a hammer to them, nor a fire, nor a ſword; there was no piercing, ſmiting, cutting, reproving, nor rebuking; the wolf lay faſt aſleep, and the ſheep-ſkin was put on. I have thought, at times, that the devil applies the word to ſuch hypocrites on purpoſe to deceive them, and that it is he that fills them with their joy, in the ſame manner as he will ſometimes throw a perſon into fits, and ſometimes deprive others of their rationality, and yet ſet them to laughing ready to kill themſelves, and keep them at it for an hour together; for I know ſome in a profeſſion who are always joyful, all the year round, and ſometimes quite filled with it, and yet have no more experience or hope than the devil himſelf. Such joy is not called the joy of the Lord, nor the joy of faith, nor rejoicing in the Spirit; but it is called *the joy of the hypocrite*: and their laughter is called *the laughter of fools;* and their light is called darkneſs: *Take heed leſt the light which is in thee be darkneſs. If the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs.* We know that the hypocrite is the devil's own child; and no wonder if the devil furniſh him with

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this light and joy upon hearing the word ; for he hears it, and anon with joy receives it, and ſuddenly ſprings up into a profeſſion.

The carnal mind is influenced with a feigned faith ; the corrupt affections put on a diſſembled love ; Satan, transformed into an angel of light, ſhines into the underſtanding ; much knowledge of the ſcriptures is given to puff up, but no knowledge of the ſinfulneſs of the human heart. Juſt ſo the devil acted with Eve : he highly applauded *the tree of knowledge*, and the wonderful effects of it, but not one word in praiſe of *the tree of life ;* and ſo here Satan highly extols the ſcriptural knowledge of his child, but not one word of the knowledge of his own wicked heart, for this the devil was the author of ; and to attempt to diſcover it would be expoſing his own work, and acting againſt himſelf.

That the devil is the author of the whole ſtock of this hypocrite's profeſſing materials, may be gathered from this : they have ſome bowels of mercy, and mantles of love, for every rank of ſinners, and for every tribe of hypocrites under heaven ; but for the poor broken-hearted, honeſt, faithful ſinner that believes on Jeſus Chriſt, they have no affection, pity, compaſſion, bowels of mercy, or mantles of love, neither for them, nor yet for their characters. Take them to your table and keep them ; bed them, board them, make them your counſellors, guides, companions, and familar friends, as David did Ahithophel ; give them titles of honour, gifts ; make them your purſe-bearers, and ſtewards of the houſehold, as Chriſt did Judas ; and all will not do ; they will ſtill hate you in their hearts with perfect hatred, and be plotting for your life : and the reaſon is, the God of Heaven is in the one, and the devil himſelf in the other ; and who can bring God and mammon, Chriſt and Belial, light and darkneſs, faith and infidelity, together ! The

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north and south poles will as soon meet together as any union ever subsist between such parties.

When the devil has influenced, varnished, polished, set forth, and equipped, such a professor, as this, he persuades him that his hearing the word, his receiving it with joy, his springing up in zeal, in knowledge, in a profession, in a reformation, and in a separation from the world, and joining with God's saints; that this is conversion, it is regeneration, and the joy that he felt is the power of God, and the confidence that attended it is the work of faith wrought in the heart with power. And he furnishes the world with preachers to confirm such in their profession. To counterfeit every distinct operation of the Spirit of God is the devil's masterpiece; and to set a sinner down in a false hope, and under an infernal influence, is the fool's deepest cell, the next to that of utter darkness.

When the devil sends one of his ministers to counterfeit the first operation of God's Spirit, the deceiver may be discovered by the following appearance: he comes with a gloomy countenance, and commands a solemn awe; his deportment is grave, his voice hollow, his looks declarative of pensiveness and deep thought; he deals much in mortality, death and judgment to come; his eyes stare, his face is pale, and his accents are weighty; a solemn gloom, dismal sensations, follow, and are communicated to all the audience; a cold chill runs through the blood, and every thought of the heart is brought into captivity to the house appointed for all living. This is a solemn meeting, and a solemn opportunity; and is called the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit: whereas this influence, according to scripture, used to be brought on by necromantic art, such as lodging in the tombs, consulting the dead; and was produced in king Saul by the peeping and muttering of the witch of Endor, who brought up Samuel; and

may now be obtained by attending the play of Macbeth. *But should not a people seek unto their God, to the living from the dead!* Old wives' fables about the night-mare, will-o'-the-wisp, and apparations, will bring on this influence even upon children, till they will conceive that the whole house is haunted.

The second branch of this deception Satan carries on by those who come to us with all the terrors and bondage of the law, driving us to the obedience of faith with the repeated discharges of hell and damnation, terrifying and frightening us out of sin, out of self and the world, and into holiness of heart, lip, and life, by resolutions, vows, fears, and toiling in our strength. These tell us that they have been shook over hell, and they are got out of all the storm without either the witness of God's Spirit, the voice of the blood of sprinkling, or the sweet *yea of everlasting love.* This passes for deep experience, for the real convictions of the Spirit of God; whereas it has been found in Cain, Judas, Esau, Ahab, and in every reprobate that is given up to a fearful looking-for of judgment; in all the surprised hypocrites in Zion, in all the fallen angels, and in all the damned in hell. It is not an experience of the wrath and curse of God, but an experience of deliverance from it, that worketh hope.

The third branch of this mimicry is displayed by the unhumbled, unpardoned, unsanctified, and unrenewed Antinomian, who has the word *assurance* on his tongue, evangelical scraps in his head, hardness in his spirit, filthiness in his life, and Satan in his heart. These mount the scorner's chair; arrogance comes out of their mouth, and they talk exceeding proudly; they brow-beat and banter both law and conscience, and bid defiance to both; and, like Balaam, call God their own: they urge their plea, put in their claim, aud puff at meekness, righteousness, peace, charity, contrition, godly sorrow, and repentance;

repentance; they become men, and put away childish things; and, having made shipwreck of all feeling, they are safe ashore, out of the reach of all fear, storm, wind, or wave, under this hardening, daring, presumptuous spirit; the alarmed, the awakened, the seeker, the watcher, the waiter, the sick, and the wounded, are often deceived; they leave their couch and quit their cells, and up into the full assurance of faith they leap, without the operation of pardoning love, or repentance unto life. But, alas! they soon find that they have all this ground to go over again. Such believers make haste, and, like Ishmael, come forth before the time of the promise. If you tell them that they sprung up too soon, that they will wither for want of root, deepness of earth, and moisture; this is making the heart of the righteous sad, whom God would not have made sad. Under the influence of this spirit Korah raised his company to confront Moses, to assert the holiness of all the people, and to invade the priest's office. Under the same influence the false apostle swayed the Corinthian church. Numbers of them, all on a sudden, were fit for orders: these were zealous of spiritual gifts; others flocked to the idols' temples; another kept his father's wife; and these desired a proof of Christ's speaking by Paul.

The fourth branch of this deception of Satan is intended to imitate brotherly love. This is carried on by those who *allure through the lust of the flesh and much wantonness.* This influence, according to Paul, is carried on privately, *by creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women*; by using exhortations which favour of *deceit, uncleanness, and guile.* 1 Thess. ii. 3. Milton represents this in its first operation on Adam and Eve after the fall as so intoxicating that they thought that new divinity was springing up within them. Some of Paul's wanton widows, under this influenza, *kicked against Christ, waxed wan-*

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ton, and turned aside after Satan. Eli's sons were both Priests of Belial; men of this cast, who used such guile in their office, as led them to sacrifice to Venus at the porch of the tabernacle. These professors are great admirers of love feasts. Peter tells us that they were spots in their feasts of charity, feeding themselves without fear; that they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, had eyes full of adultery; cursed children, that could not cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. The way to find such men out is, to look at their congregations; and, when you see two or three women to one man, you may be sure that Belial is in the pulpit; for God has fixed it as an eternal rule, and we may judge by it, that there shall be, *like people like priest.*

The fifth influenza is intended to counterfeit the melting operations of the spirit of love, which is produced by those who are skilled in empty oratory. Such feel out and play upon the corrupted passions of flesh and blood; they make their bowels yearn and sound like an harp. This produces a voluntary humility, natural meekness, weeping, and lifting up the hands; glee, joy, and the raptures of the wayside hearers, follow. This is called a refreshing time; every plant is watered at such seasons as these. I once heard of an old lady who went into a meeting-house accidentally to hear a sermon, and there was an orator in the pulpit; and the good old matron was wrought upon, and went after the sermon was over and offered herself to the minister as a member; informing him of the power that she had felt, and of her conversion under the discourse. He wanted to know what part of his discourse it was that had done the execution; but her heart was so big, and her tears flowed so fast, that she was obliged to give some vent to her passions before she could speak. The word, she said, she should never forget as long as she lived; and at last, with a

mighty

mighty burſt of noiſe, paſſion, and tears, ſhe ſaid the word was *Meſopotamia*; that is the name of a country. From this ſort of fire the fooliſh virgin gets her ſpark; for this is ſtrange fire: *Walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that you have kindled: this ſhall you have at my hand, you ſhall lie down in ſorrow.*

Hence it is plain that the *joy* of the Lord which is produced in the ſoul, under the operations of the Holy Ghoſt, is the *oil* of the wiſe virgin; and the *joy* that ſprings up in the heart at the ſtirrings and motions of natural affections is the light and blaze of this fooliſh one. Their zeal, fervour, gifts, and profeſſion, ſpring up from the heat of inward paſſions; and ſo the Saviour intimates: *He receives the word with joy, yet hath he not root in himſelf, but endures for a while, and in temptation falls away.* This the Lord calls withering; and when the ſun was up it was ſcorched, and becauſe it had no root it withered. *All the trees of the field are withered; becauſe joy is withered away from the ſons of men.* Joel i. 12.

There is no mention made in my text of any *veſſel* that theſe fools took: *They took their lamps, but took no oil with them.* I have ſhewn it as my opinion, that the lamp of this fool is the law; and by their having no *oil*, we may ſee that God doth not miniſter the ſpirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith; nor does grace flow in that channel; faith comes by hearing of faith, and grace is communicated by God's giving teſtimony to the words of his grace; and all real joy is produced by the Spirit of God; nothing of all which comes by the preaching of the law, nor by the works of the law. The reaſon that there is no mention made of a *veſſel* is, becauſe all this profeſſion is carried on without the heart; they took their lamps and went forth, but their hearts ſtayed at home in the world: *Their heart is far from me, therefore in vain they worſhip me.* God requires a heart ſenſible of its own

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plague, a broken and a contrite heart; a believing heart, and a heart circumciſed to love him; and without this veſſel all religion is nought, and without the *oil of joy* all worſhip is a taſk. I come now,

Laſtly, To ſhew the cauſe of theſe lamps going out, and what it was that extinguiſhed them. Sometimes the light of theſe hypocrites is from God; and I believe that the light of ſome others is not from God, but from Satan. It is ſaid that the *Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he ſaw the angel of the Lord ſtanding in his way, and his drawn ſword in his hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.* Hence he ſo often boaſts and ſays, *Balaam, the ſon of Beor, hath ſaid, and the man whoſe eyes are open, hath ſaid; he hath ſaid which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Moſt High, which ſaw the viſion of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.* And what does he ſee? He ſees his own way to be perverſe before God; he ſees before hand a drawn ſword, which was to ſhew him, had he underſtood it, that he ſhould fall in his rebellion by the ſword of Iſrael, and afterwards be cut aſunder with the ſword of juſtice, and have his portion appointed with hypocrites and unbelievers. And this every hypocrite ſees in this world, who, in ſtrict juſtice is given up to a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries; and all other hypocrites, who die without theſe awful viſions, will have them hereafter; for we read of ſome who in hell lift up their eyes. But Balaam's eyes were opened in this world; and he ſees the ſafety of Iſrael, the death of the righteous, and the deſtruction of Amalek, and perhaps his own baniſhment; *I ſhall ſee him, but not now; I ſhall behold him, but not nigh.* He would ſee him at the day of Judgment, though not now; and he would in hell behold him, but not nigh; for there is a great gulf fixed between theſe two parties. How

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lofty, how pompous this poor, proud, boaſting hypocrite ſpeaks; how does this knowledge puff him up! and ſo it doth all others, as well as he, who never knew the plague of their own heart.

The light that Jehu had in the ſcriptures, which he diſcerned when he executed God's judgments on the houſe of Ahab, ſeems to be from the ſame fountain with this of Balaam. But the light of ſome hypocrites ſeems to come from another quarter; for, if Satan can transform himſelf into the likeneſs of an angel of light, there muſt be ſome ſort of ſhining rays about him, which muſt be intended to deceive ſome of his own children, who are given up to his ſtrong deluſions. Saul ſaw that David would ſurely be king, and that the kingdom would be eſtabliſhed in his hand, and that he ſhould go on and proſper. But who could ſhew him this? The Lord was departed from him long before, and an evil ſpirit troubled him. This light was from Satan; and ſo was the light of Haman's wiſe men, and of Zeriſh his wife, who told Haman that, if Mordecai was of the ſeed of the Jews, he ſhould not prevail againſt him, but ſhould ſurely fall before him. The light that was in Judas ſeems to come from this transformation of Satan. *Take heed*, ſays the Saviour, *leſt the light that is in thee, be darkneſs*: and in this darkneſs are all thoſe who in their hearts hate the ſaints of God, let them have what light, knowledge, or underſtanding, they may: *For he that hateth his brother, is in darkneſs, and walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes.* And this was the caſe with Judas; he hated Chriſt in his heart, though he followed him in order to get into the miniſtry, to get the name of an apoſtle, and to bear the bag, and rob the common ſtock; he hated Chriſt, betrayed him, and ſold him; and Chriſt plainly called him a devil, for the devil ſhined upon him, and actuated him, and

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at last entered into him, and took full possession of him. But the devil would not kill him when he had got him, for that would have been Satan's sin, and not Judas's; but the devil tempted him to kill himself, that the sin of suicide might be added to all the rest: and here we may see the wisdom of the serpent. Thus it appears that God opens the eyes of some hypocrites, as Balaam, Jehu, and the Egyptians in the Red Sea, when *the eye of the Lord looked through the cloud, and troubled the host of Pharoah; and they said, Let us fly from Israel, for the Lord fighteth for Israel against the Egyptians.*

The false rays of these hypocrites may be discovered by the discerning Christian by the following observations. I have, in the general, perceived that they are noted for finding out some new mysteries, or some new discoveries, or some new interpretations, of scripture, which, as they think, never were seen before. This makes them intolerably proud; and, when once Satan has deceived them in this way, their wisdom is exalted as if it was almost infinite; for, after this, all who attempt to undeceive them are fools. Hence the Spirit tells you, *They hold fast deceit; they refuse to let it go.* When the devil has got a man safe in his net, he will roll and tumble him farther and farther, till he is bound both hand and foot, so that *he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? A deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he feedeth upon ashes.* Hence the cautions that God gives his children, *Reprove not a scorner:* and again, *He that remains an heretic, after the first or second admonition, reject; knowing that such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

The ways that the devil leads these hypocrites are various. Those which I have observed are these: some are led to stumble at the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.—Here Satan drives them, by pride, into most daring and desperate presumption, and all manner of errors, and God resists them as forcibly.

Others

Others are continually working at the great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh, until they ſtumble, and take offence at the Rock of our ſtrength, which they are ſure to do ſooner or later; for they have no light but in the head, which lifts them up; no feeling ſenſe of their own ignorance to keep them humble; nor the Spirit of God to guide them. Almoſt every arch heretic mentioned in the hiſtory of Euſebius ſtumbled and fell here.

Others, like Pelagius, begin in the Spirit and end in the fleſh. Satan ſets them to exalt themſelves, and debaſe the grace of God. Theſe leave the doctrine of the Trinity alone; as the papiſts, arminians, and others.

Others he deceives by ſtuffing their heads with high notions, and ſetting them up to be ſomething when they are nothing. This draws many poor, ſimple ſouls to look up to them as wonders from the Lord of Hoſts; and then Satan tempts them to final apoſtaſy. This ſtumbles and ſtaggers many poor ſouls, who uſed to view them as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. However, God's elect muſt pluck out theſe right eyes, and caſt them from them, and cut off thoſe right feet whoſe apoſtaſy offends them, and caſt them from them, and enter into life halt and maimed, rather than, having ſuch eyes and ſuch feet, to be caſt into hell fire.

This light of the fooliſh, which goes out, never ſhines into their heart. It is not that candle of the Lord which ſearches all the innermoſt parts of the belly: it ſhines only in the head. *But God, who cauſed the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhines into the heart* (of his people), *to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* This is *ſearching Jeruſalem as with candles.* It diſcovers the enmity, rebellion, wickedneſs, and hypocriſy, of the heart, while dreadful rebukes and reproofs follow. *All things which are reproved are made manifeſt by the light which doth appear; for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light. Wherefore he ſaith, Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.* And this light leads the believer into an experience which no fooliſh virgin, nor hypocrite in Zion, ever attained to, and that is, *to love God, becauſe God firſt loved him;* and to love Chriſt, who loved him, and gave himſelf for him; and to love the ſaints for Chriſt's ſake, and becauſe of the grace of God which is in them; and ſo it is written, *Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, becauſe the darkneſs is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him.* This new commandment is given by Chriſt: *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another*

as I have loved you. John iii. 34. *This commandment,* John says, *is true in him and in us.* It is true in him, because he loved us, and gave his life for us; and it is true in us, because we love him, and the brethren for his sake: and where this is, the true light is now shining, and there is none occasion of stumbling in such, for such are passed from death unto life. The world loves its own, but hates the saints; and the real saints hate the world, and love one another.

One cause of the lamps of these foolish virgins going out at the midnight cry is, Satan at this time laid aside his transformation, the business was done, the prey was safe in the trap. Besides, at this dreadful period Satan cannot use such trifling deception as this; he must appear in all his madness, rage, and desperation, for he himself believes and trembles at God's judgments, and is as much afraid of future torment as the hypocrite himself; hence his outcry, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?*

2. This alarm made these secure hypocrites set about a work which they had never done before, and that is, self-examination; upon which they soon discovered that their *lamps were out,* and that they had no *oil with them;* which is what they never found out till now. This sudden alarm awakened them out of their security, and begun to terrify them; their false notion of being drawn all the way to heaven by love failed them, and left them doubtful; their speculative knowledge fled; the joy that sprung from the stirrings-up of natural affections withered away; blind zeal, external reformation, feigned faith, and dissembled love, were soon blasted; when all on a sudden the enmity, rebellion, deception, hypocrisy, and deceitfulness of their own hearts began to appear; for this dross and tin had never been discovered, nor purged off in the furnace of affliction. Upon the back of this the terrors of God, the bondage and slavish fear of the law, the wrath and curse of it, began to stir-up in them; for all these things are in the tabernacles of the wicked, as was the case here; and they are in every one else, except those where perfect love hath cast them out. Their deceitfulness in their profession, the wicked works that they allowed themselves in, stared them in the face, for such they were; and *workers of iniquity,* Christ calls them. Conscience now began to lay about him, and to act his part; and at this their hope perished, and it gave up the ghost, and all their trust became a spider's web. The motions of their natural passions, under the empty oratory of the ministers of Satan, which used to pass for godly sorrow, became of no use here, for at this time their spirits appeared hardened, and as callous as a rock; and the checks and rebukes of conscience, which used to be called the workings of

Satan,

Satan, and the ſtruggles of the old man, and be reſiſted as ſuch, muſt now be attended to as a worm that never dies.

All theſe things were found out when they came to *trim their lamps.* Well may Solomon call their joy *the joy of the hypocrite, which is but for a moment. They heard the word, and anon with joy received it* ; but they had no root in themſelves ; and now the word has left them, and all their joy is withered away : *Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.* Theſe knew who had oil, though they had none themſelves. This they might eaſily diſcern by the compoſed frame that the wiſe were in, by the health and cheerfulneſs that ſhewed itſelf in their countenances ; by the life, fervour, and power, that appeared both in them and in their devotions, even in the worſt of times ; and they might know this from what they had heard and ſeen of their paſt experiences ; and from the many ſuſpicions which the wiſe had had of the ſtate of theſe fooliſh ones in times paſt, and by the repeated reproofs which they had received from them. And I have ſeen not a little of this in my time ; not a few, who have hated me and my doctrine too, have on a ſick bed craved an intereſt in my prayers, and wiſhed to ſee me.

Give us of your oil ; ſpeak to us, try to comfort us, and pray for us, and communicate ſome of your joy and comfort to our hearts. But the wiſe knew pretty well what preachers and what doctrines uſed to ſuit them beſt ; and therefore they ſay unto them, *Go to them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves.*— They did not go to Chriſt to buy without money and without price ; but they went to ſome of their favourite preachers, who had extolled the power of man's free-will, his faithfulneſs to grace received, and the talents which fall to the ſhare of all men, and the improvements of theſe ; for none but ſuch as theſe, and the Pope of Rome, ever pretend to ſell theſe things ; and theſe fooliſh ſouls knew that theſe wiſe virgins were averſe to all theſe tenets, and therefore they never offered to buy of them, but to beg : *Give us of your oil.* But they ſent them to thoſe that pretend to ſell ; Go to your old builders-up, to thoſe that uſed to daub you with untempered mortar ; thoſe who propheſied ſmooth things to you, and whom you uſed ſo much to applaud ; who have got ſuch power, ſuch talents, ſuch a ſtock of inherent grace to improve, and a power to come to Chriſt if they will, and to ſtay away if they pleaſe ; to keep the whole law, and to work out a righteouſneſs for themſelves. And to theſe they went, in hopes they would confirm their former doctrine, and not to Chriſt ; for *while they went to buy the bridegroom came*, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was ſhut ; *and afterward came the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord,*

Lord, open to us. But it was too late; the top-ſtone was brought forth, the door of faith, the door of hope, and mercy's door, were cloſed; and none were within but the regenerate, nor any without but the workers of iniquity. An open door is now before us; the gate of life ſtill admits weary and heavy-laden ſinners. Enter this, and you ſhall enter the other: Strive *to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, for this ſtands at the head of the way of life; *and they that enter here ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out and find paſture.*

THE END.

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